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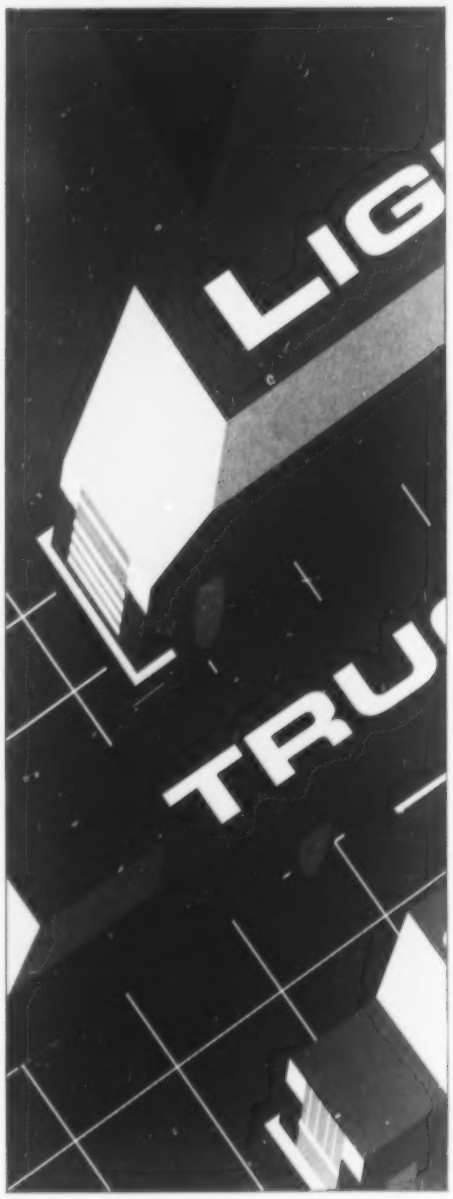
June 1992

Chilton's
AUTOMOTIVE MARKETING

JUNE ISSUE/VOLUME 21,NUMBER 6



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AUTOMOTIVE MARKETING-ISSN 0193-3264 Published monthly (12 times a year) by Chilton Company, Chilton Way, Radnor, PA 19089. Chilton Co. is a division of American Broadcasting Companies Inc., New York, NY. Subscription prices (payable in advance) in the United States and U.S. possessions $36.00 a year. Canada, $70.00 a year. Single copies $3.50 each when available. U.S. only. SECOND CLASS postage paid at Wayne, PA 19087 and additional mailing offices. Postmaster send form 3579 at AUTOMOTIVE MARKETING, PO Box 2075, Radnor, PA 19089. Canadian GST Registration Number is R125906743.

JESSE H. NEAL AWARD-WINNING PUBLICATION FIVE OUT OF EIGHT YEARS

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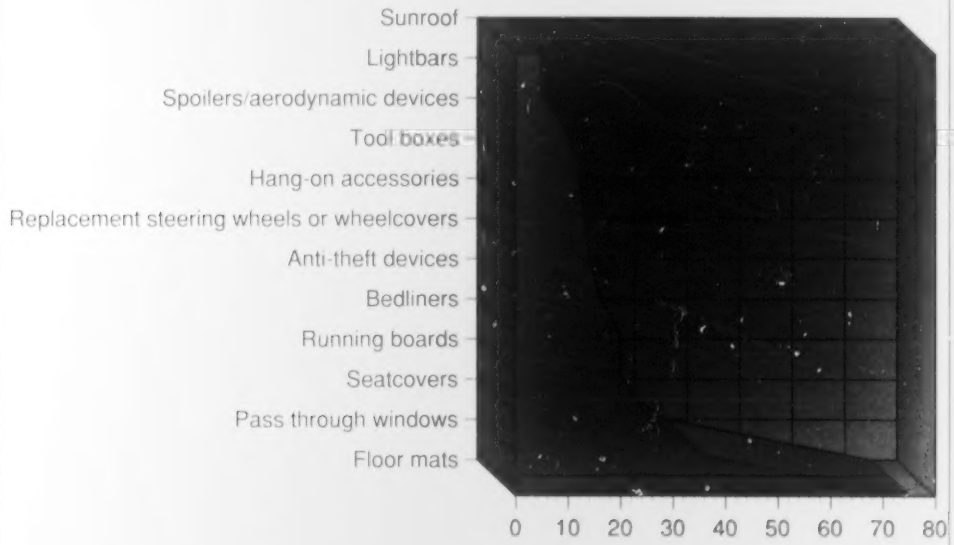
Sales of light trucks have begun to climb as the recession ends. It's time again to look at the owners of these vehicles and their habits.

by **Philip Katcher,**
Business Editor

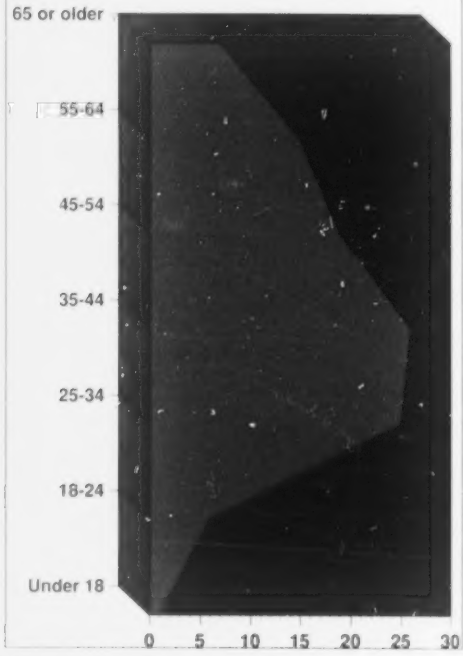
ACCESSORIES ON THEIR LIGHT TRUCKS

Floor mats were the most owned type of accessory among those who drive light trucks, vans, or utility vehicles.



AGE OF THE LIGHT TRUCK MAINTAINER

Maintainers of light trucks, vans, and utility vehicles are slightly younger than car maintainers as a whole.

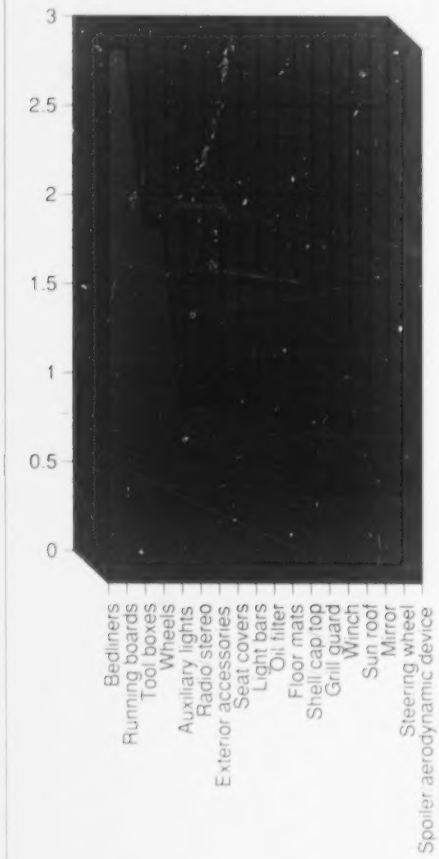


WHAT THEY BOUGHT FIRST

Most light truck owners bought floor mats as their first accessory after buying the vehicle. Even so, only 10% bought them first, so there was a wide variety of types of accessories purchased as that first item.

WHAT THEY'LL BUY NEXT

Bedliners were the most mentioned item for a next light truck purchase.



maintainers were 55-years-old or more.

There is a great deal more even spread in terms of income levels. Even so, 38% of all light truck maintainers make over $40,000 in annual household income. Indeed, the percentage of light truck owners declines with falling annual household income levels. Another 19% of light truck maintainers make between $30,000 and $40,000 in annual household income; 18% make between $20,000 and $30,000; and 14% make under $20,000 in annual household income.

Virtually two thirds of all light truck maintainers are also DIYers to a significant extent. In all, 30% said they are "dedicated" DIYers who can even do major engine work. Another third are "medium" DIYers who change their own oil and filters. In all, 28% are "light" DIYers who only top off oil or do similar minor jobs. Only 9% say they don't do any of their own vehicle maintenance work.

This means extra sales to light truck maintainers for aftermarket retailers. Because, not only are these maintainers buying products for their light trucks, but the large majority of them also maintain another vehicle—often a car—and buy products for that, as well. In all, 43% of light truck maintainers say they are responsible for maintaining three of more vehicles. Another 43% say they maintain two vehicles, the light truck and one other vehicle.

The Van Owner

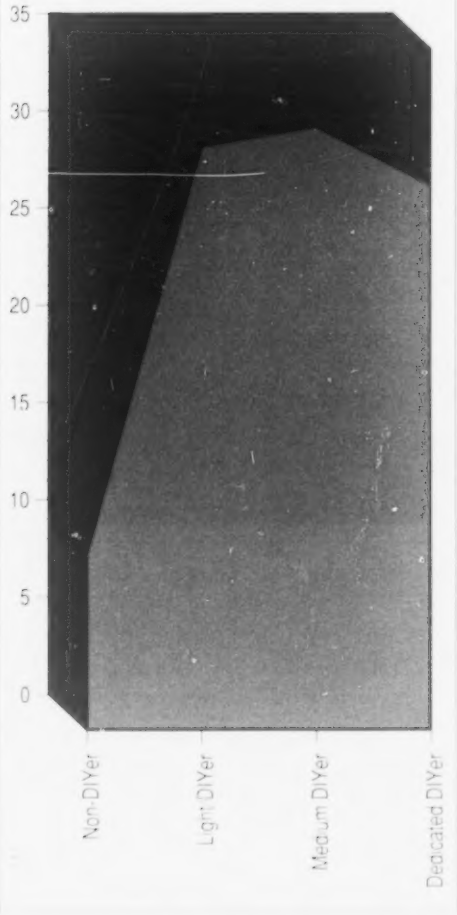
Vans have often replaced station wagons as primary vehicles for larger families. There's a different image for the van owner—a sensible, family image rather than a hard-working, hard-living light truck owner. And the numbers tend to bear out these differences as having some validity.

Just over a quarter (27%) of all types of vehicle maintainers who have one of these types of vehicles, owns a van.

More women maintain vans than light trucks, at least in terms of percentages of all vehicle maintainers. In all, 28% of van maintainers are

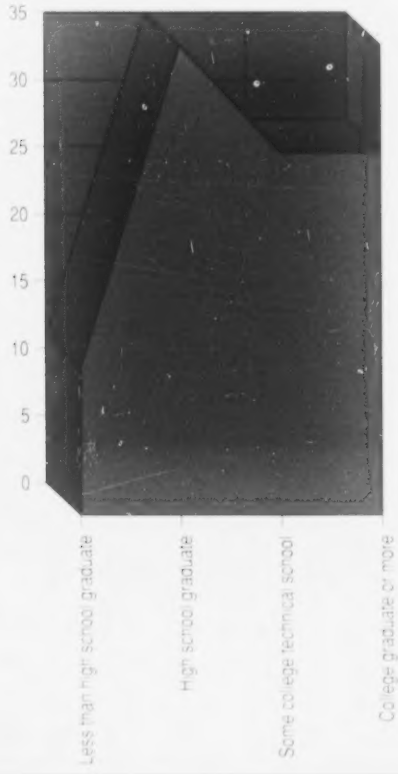
HOW LIGHT TRUCK MAINTAINERS DEFINE THEMSELVES AS DIYERS

Maintainers of light trucks, vans, and utility vehicles tend to be DIYers in greater numbers than car maintainers.



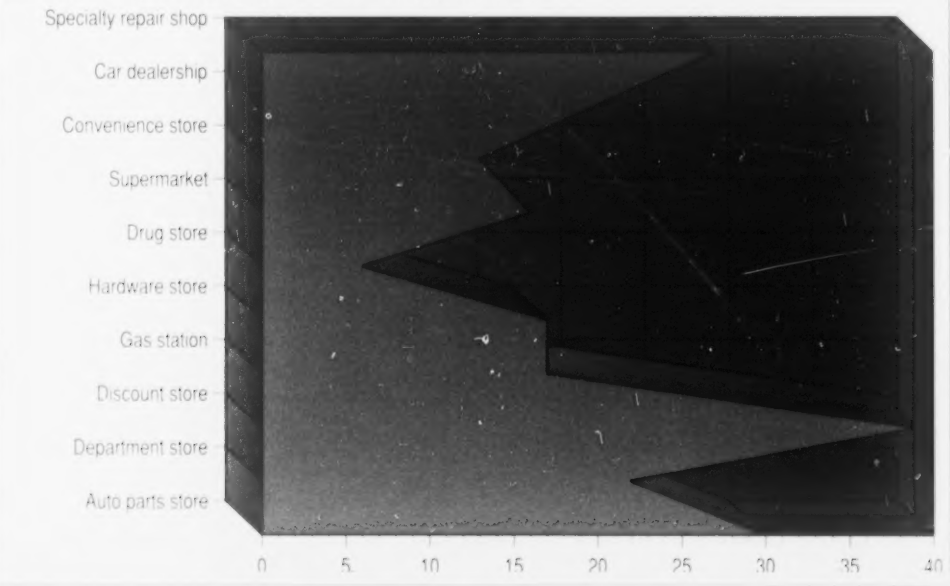
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF THE LIGHT TRUCK MAINTAINER

Over half of the maintainers of light trucks, vans, and utility vehicles went to college.



WHERE THEY BUY AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTS

Maintainers of light trucks, vans, and utility vehicles turn first to a discount store for automotive products, then to an auto parts store.



HOW MUCH THEY ENJOY AUTOMOTIVE DIY

Maintainers of light trucks, vans, and utility vehicles tend to enjoy doing their own automotive DIY work in greater numbers than car maintainers.

female. Van maintainers are younger than light truck maintainers. While only 5% are under 25 years old and 22% are between 25 and 34 years old, 30% are between 35 and 44 years old. And another 27% are between 45 and 54 years old, making the prime income years also prime van owning years.

Proof of this is shown in the fact that over half (52%) of all van maintainers make $40,000 or more in total annual household income. Another 13% make between $30,000 and $40,000 in annual household income. Clearly van maintainers have money to spend on their vehicles.

One might think that such respectable annual household incomes come at the cost of time available for such work as automotive DIY work. This would appear to be the case, since one third of all van maintainers say they're "light" DIYers while another third say they're "medium" DIYers.

Still, they're forced to spend money to maintain vehicles. For almost half of all van maintainers (48%) say their van is only one of at least three vehicles in their households they have to maintain. Another 39% say the van is one of two vehicles they must maintain.

The Utility Vehicle Maintainer

Much of what is true about light truck maintainers is true about the maintainers of utility vehicles such as Jeeps or Troopers. In all, 17% of maintainers who own at least one of these types of vehicles, owns a utility vehicle.

They are mostly men—almost three quarters of them are male.

They are mostly between 25 and 44 years old. In all, 28% are between 25 and 34 years old, and 30% are between 35 and 44 years old.

They make enough in annual household income to afford what is essentially a fun, rather than necessary, vehicle. Almost half (46%) make over $40,000 in annual household income. Another 18% make between $30,000 and $40,000, while only $13% make between $20,000 and $40,000. The latter is the same percentage as utility vehicle maintainers making under $20,000 in annual household income.

One quarter say they are "dedicated" automotive DIYers. A third are "medium" DIYers. And just over a quarter are "light" DIYers.

Finally, over half (55%) include their utility vehicles among at least three household vehicles they must maintain. Another 41% have at least one other vehicle they maintain in their household. ■